

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 MCT-01 SY-05

A-01 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00 IO-13 DHA-02 /082 W

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O R 111936Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9731

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

USEC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, SP

SUBJECT: ABERRI EGUNA LEAVES ONE GRAVELY WOUNDED, A FEW ROUGHED UP

REF: MADRID 2673

1. POLICE AND CIVIL GUARD UNITS IMPLEMENTED THE GOVT'S PROHIBITION OF THE COMMEMORATION OF ABERRI EGUNA (BASQUE NATIONAL DAY -- REFTEL) BY PREVENTING NON-RESIDENTS FROM ENTERING THE ALAVESE CAPITAL OF VITORIA ON MAJOR ACCESS ROUTES AND BY MOVING QUICKLY TO BREAK UP ANY ATTEMPTS TO MOUNT DEMONSTRATIONS IN VITORIA OR OTHER BASQUE URBAN CENTERS. THERE REPORTEDLY WERE NUMEROUS CLASHES BETWEEN

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POLICE AND KNOTS OF DEMONSTRATORS, USUALLY NOT EXCEEDING 100 IN NUMBER, IN A NUMBER OF BASQUE CITIES, PARTICULARLY VITORIA AND BILBAO.

2. ONE DEMONSTRATOR REPORTEDLY WAS SHOT IN THE HEAD AND GRAVELY WOUNDED DURING A CLASH WITH POLICE IN DURANGO, VIZCAYA, NEAR BILBAO, AND A HALF DOZEN OTHER DEMONSTRATORS

WERE TREATED FOR CONTUSIONS AND RELEASED. AMCONSUL BIL-
BAO REPORTS THAT IN VITORIA, A BELGIAN CAMERAMAN FILM-
ING ON THE CONFRONTATIONS WAS STRUCK BY A RUBBER
BULLET, AND A NUMBER OF OTHER NEWSMEN WHO CAME TO HIS
ASSISTANCE WERE ROUGHED UP AND DETAINED TEMPORARILY BY
POLICE.

3. THE BASQUE NATIONALIST PARTY (PNV) SPONSORED A PEACE-
FUL RALLY IN THE SMALL GUIPUZCOAN LOCALITY OF LOYOLA,
WHERE PARTY LEADERS JAVIER ARZULLUZ AND JUAN AJURIAGUER-
RA REPORTEDLY ADDRESSED A THRONG OF 10-15,000. AFTER
ATTACKING THE GOVT FOR ITS PROHIBITION OF THE VITORIA
COMMEMORATION RALLY AND FOR ITS FAILURE TO LIVE UP TO
ITS "PROMISE" TO RELEASE ALL BASQUE "POLITICAL" PRISONERS
BY ABERRI EGUNA, ARZALLUZ AND AJURIAGUERRA HEADED A
MARCH TOWARD THE NEARBY TOWN OF AZPEITIA. WHEN THEY
WERE PREVENTED FROM ENTERING THE TOWN, HOWEVER, THE
MARCH RETURNED TO LOYOLA AND DISPERSED.

4. COMMENT: LARGELY DUE TO THE RESTRAINT OF THE MAJOR
BASQUE POLITICAL GROUPS, PARTICULARLY THE PNV, WHO WOULD
HAVE MUCH TO LOSE IN ANY CHALLENGE TO PUBLIC ORDER WHICH
COULD ENDANGER THE PROSPECTS FOR ELECTIONS, ABERRI EGUNA
CONFRONTATIONS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN MUCH LESS DAMAGING
THAN THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN. BY ITS PROHIBITION OF THE
VITORIA COMMEMORATION, THE GOVT DEMONSTRATED ONCE
AGAIN THE DISTANCE YET TO BE TRAVELED IN ACCOMMODAT-
ING BASQUE ASPIRATIONS TO THE GOVT'S CONCERNS FOR THE
MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC ORDER. THE PROHIBITION MAY HAVE
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RESULTED FROM THE GOVT'S RELUCTANCE TO TAKE A CHANCE
ON PUBLIC ORDER IN VITORIA BREAKING DOWN -- AND WAVING
A RED FLAG IN FRONT OF THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN CON-
SERVATIVES -- AT THE SAME TIME THAT IT HAD DECIDED TO
TAKE THE CONTROVERSIAL STEP OF LEGALIZING THE PCE. STABLER

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